The Company so far has not shown any interest in going ahead with the proposal as they are yet to respond to certain clarifications requested on the proposal.

Setting up of telephone exchanges in Assam

229. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government propose to set up telephone exchanges in all the Blocks/Districts of Assam;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the effective measures being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) to (c) All the 23 Revenue District Head Quarters are already having telephone exchanges in Assam. Out of 219 Block Head Quarters, 170 Block Head Quarters are having telephone exchanges. Due to non-availability of minimum registered demand, telephone exchanges could not be opened in the balance 49 Block Head Quarters (BHQs). Exchanges will be opened in these BHQs as and when the minimum registered demand is received.

Setting up of a National Internet Exchange

†230. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state;

(a) whether the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has submitted a suggestion to Government to set up a National Internet Exchange for development of internet keeping in view of slow expansion of internet in the country;

(b) if so, the other suggestions given by the authority to boost development of internet;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether Government have taken any step in this regard; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) had constituted a Task Force to prepare an action plan to accelerate the growth of Internet and to recommend *inter-alia* a methodology to set up Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) for peering of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) so as to save cost of International Bandwidth TRAI is of the view that IXPs should be set up as commercial entities and be run by industry itself, *e.g.* through Internet Service Providers Association of India (ISPAI). The IXPs may initially be set up in the four metro cities and in due course, similar peering points may be established at State capitals, so the bandwidth on the national backbone as well can be saved.

(b) The other salient suggestions of TRAI are:

(i) De-licensing of the 2.4 GHz(ISM) band for low power, short range outdoor W-LAN applications and last mile Internet access.

(ii) Facilitation of direct access by ISPs to the bottleneck facilities for access to International Submarine Cable Systems.

(iii) ISPs to be conferred the status of Infrastructure Industry.

(iv) Economic incentives to be considered to reduce the cost of Internet access devices.

(c) and (d) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has decreased the tariff rates for Internet access calls by half during non peak hours in the night (from 22.30 hrs. to 06.30 hrs).

Ill-effects of Radiation from Mobile Phones

†231. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the ill-effects on human body from the radiation emitting from mobile phone;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.